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(AP) LEASED WIRE AND FEATURES

FREDERICK, MD.,

Long Range Air

Not in with post although in 4:30 pm TV news 12/7/65

WEDNESDAY,

Defense

Post

GOOD MORNING!

Church members should be told by their pastors that driving involves a moral responsibility to act safely on the highways.

(Bishop A. Frank Smith)

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Slash Looms

Two-Thirds Of Bombing Fleet To Be Scrapped By Target 1971

WASHINGTON (AP)—Officials plan to reduce the U. S. long-range bomber force to about 250 planes—about one-third of current bomber strength — by 1971, sources indicated Tuesday night.

At the same time, the sources indicated that U. S. air defenses against the Russian bomber threat also will be scaled down.

Information given to Congress in connection with Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara's plan announced Monday to cut out 149 more military bases pointed in the direction of a bomber and air defense cutback.

Details of the planned base closings are expected to be made public Wednesday by the Defense Department.

By all signs, the Pentagon intends to retain a bomber force of some 250 B52G and B52H models after 1971. These are the latest versions of the B52. They have greater range and more powerful engines than the earlier models.

Currently the United States has about 680 long-range bombers — about 600 of them B52s

and about 80 supersonic B58s.

Congress has been informed that all the B58s will be out of service by 1971, as apparently will all B52s from the Model B through F.

The decision to phase out B52s and B58s over the next five or six years may be tied to a reported intention by the administration to propose an advanced bomber version of the controversial TFX airplane.

It is known that top defense officials have been considering ordering an adaptation of the TFX, which now is designed chiefly as a fighter, into a bomber version which would be heavier and longer than the fighter type.

This is regarded as a compromise short of the Air Force's proposal to build an entirely new advanced manned strategic aircraft which would cost an estimated \$10 billion.

Pentagon plans, as indicated in the reports to congressmen, apparently call for reducing the number of fighter-interceptor squadrons and the number of Nike-Hercules antiaircraft missile batteries.

The United States currently is estimated to have a 6-to-1 margin of superiority over the Russians in long-range bombers.

A scaling down of air defenses probably means that U.S. planners now consider a bomber attack on the United States highly unlikely.